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in Collaboration with
Balai Bahasa Provinsi Jawa Tengah



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“The Role of Indigenous Languages in Constructing Identity”

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NOTE

This international seminar on Language Maintenance and Shift V (LAMAS V for short) is a continuation of the previous LAMAS seminars conducted annually by the Master Program in Linguistics, Diponegoro University in cooperation with *Balai Bahasa Provinsi Jawa Tengah*.

We would like to extend our deepest gratitude to the seminar committee for putting together the seminar that gave rise to this compilation of papers. Thanks also go to the Head and the Secretary of the Master Program in Linguistics Diponegoro University, without whom the seminar would not have been possible.

The table of contents lists 92 papers presented at the seminar. Of these papers, 5 papers are presented by invited keynote speakers. They are Prof. Aron Reppmann, Ph.D. (Trinity Christian College, USA), Prof. Yudha Thianto, Ph.D. (Trinity Christian College, USA), Dr. Priyankoo Sarmah, Ph.D. (Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati, India), Helena I.R. Agustien, Ph.D. (Semarang State University, Indonesia), and Dr. M. Suryadi, M.Hum. (Diponegoro University, Indonesia).

In terms of the topic areas, the papers are in sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, theoretical linguistics, antropolinguistics, pragmatics, applied linguistics, and discourse analysis.

NOTE FOR REVISED EDITION

There is a little change in this revised edition, which as the shifting of some parts of the article by Tatan Tawami and Retno Purwani Sari entitled “Sundanese Identity Represented by the Talents of *Ini Talkshow* A Study of Pragmatics” on page 166 to 167. This has an impact on the change of table of contents.

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"The Role of Indigenous Languages in Constructing Identity"

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 2015					
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LANGUAGE MAINTENANCE AND SHIFT: THE ASSAM SORA PERSPECTIVE

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INTRODUCTION

A multilingual situation always leads to change in the languages. While some languages shift or die in such situations, some do survive and prosper. Considering the large number of languages present in a geographical area, India or Indonesia thus becomes fertile grounds for studies to investigate the motivations for language change, shift, maintenance etc. The importance of recording the languages in India was realized in the colonial period and George A Grierson, a civil servant in the British Government was entrusted with the responsibility of conducting the Linguistic Survey of India that was carried out between 1894 and 1928. Grierson's survey described 733 languages and dialects spoken in India at the time of his survey.

India has about 356 officially recorded languages, while the unofficial and probably the true number is much higher. Again out of these recorded languages, the Indian census system categorizes languages as 'scheduled', 'non-scheduled' and 'mother tongues'. While the scheduled languages are official languages of different states in India, non-scheduled languages and mother tongues are languages with a speaking population of above 10,000. According to the census of India, there are 22 scheduled languages in India while the number for non-scheduled languages and mother tongues are 100 and 234, respectively²⁵. Independent sources claim that the actual number of languages in India can be much more. According to Ethnologue, the number of languages in India is 461 of which 447 are living and 14 are extinct. Among the living languages, 63 are institutional, 130 are developing, 187 are vigorous, 54 are in trouble, and 13 are dying. The UNESCO has also compiled a list of languages in danger in the world. In this list, there are 193 languages in India that are in danger (Moseley, 2010). Out of these 193 languages, 120 are from the North East India (see Figure 1).

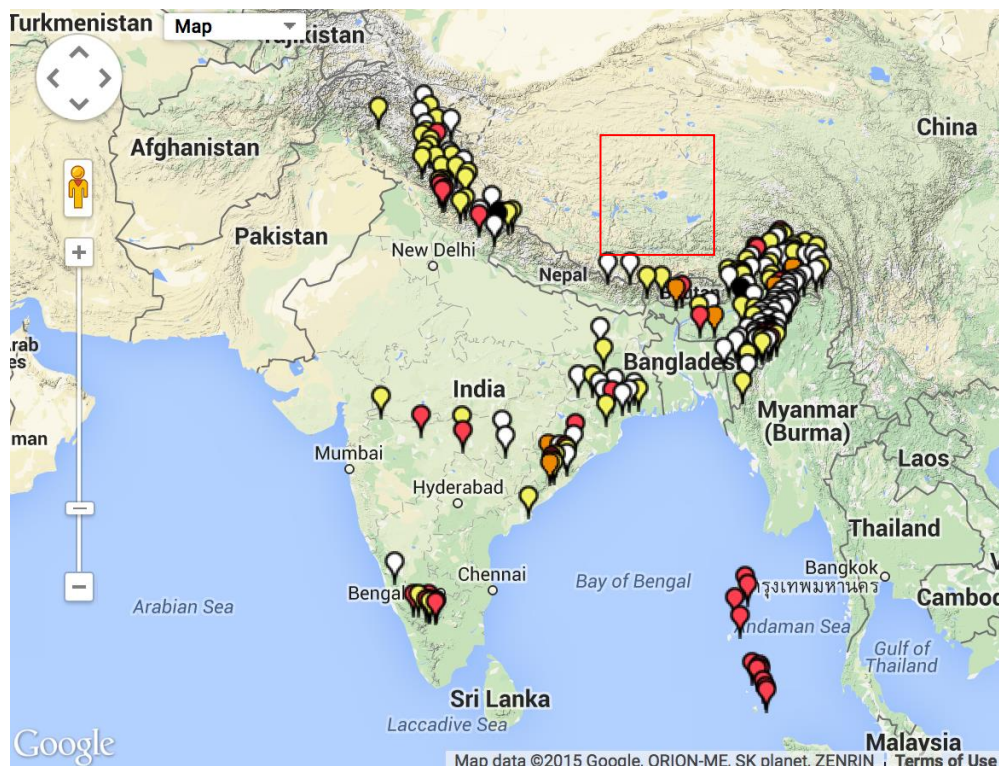


Figure 1: Distribution of languages in danger with North East India in a box (Moseley, 2010)

²⁵ Source: Census of India (2001). www.censusindia.gov.in. Retrieved on 8th August 2014.

While many of these languages have succumbed to the pressures of existence, many in spite of their small number and lack of resources have survived and prospered. Among the areas of India, the North-East (NE) Indian region (Figure 2) shows astounding linguistic diversity, making it one of the most linguistically diverse areas in the world (Lewis *et al* 2015). In sections to follow we will discuss the linguistic situation in NE India.

Linguistic Situation in NE India

North East India boasts a myriad of languages from several language families. Languages belonging to all four major language families are spoken in NE India. Apart from Indo-European, Dravidian and Austro-Asiatic Languages, NE India has the highest number of Tibeto-Burman languages in the world (van Driem 2014, Figure 3). Assamese, Bodo, Meitei-lon, Khasi and Mizo are some of the major languages spoken in the area and they cover 53% of the total population of the area (38,857,769). The other languages share 47% of the population demonstrating the volatility of the linguistic situation here. Even in the official records, many of the non-scheduled languages are spoken in this area.

While this area has originally been an area of linguistic diversity, several political and economic forces further complicated the situation. Waves of migration to this area in the known and unknown past, invasion by neighboring countries and finally the British colonialism has an evident influence on the linguistic diversity in this area.

In NE India, the province of Assam was the first province colonized by British in the 19th century. In 1826, the treaty of Yandaboo was signed that effectively brought Assam under the British Empire. The British also had major economic interests in this area. It was a time Britain was trying hard to quench the average Briton's thirst for Chinese tea. However, Chinese tea was not the most feasible option at a time when China imposed heavy restriction on the import of their tea. The British knew that traditionally many ethnic communities in Assam were consuming tea as medicine or as a beverage. British wanted to commercialize the tea production in Assam. As the Assamese natives were considered not the best suitable for doing manual labor in the tea gardens, the British started to import bonded laborers from Chota Nagpur, lower Bengal, Bihar, southern parts of the North Western Provinces and south India to Assam. Apart from that due to the Burmese invasions and Moamoria rebellion in Assam, the Assamese population dwindled; which also prompted import of labor from outside Assam (Behal, 2014).

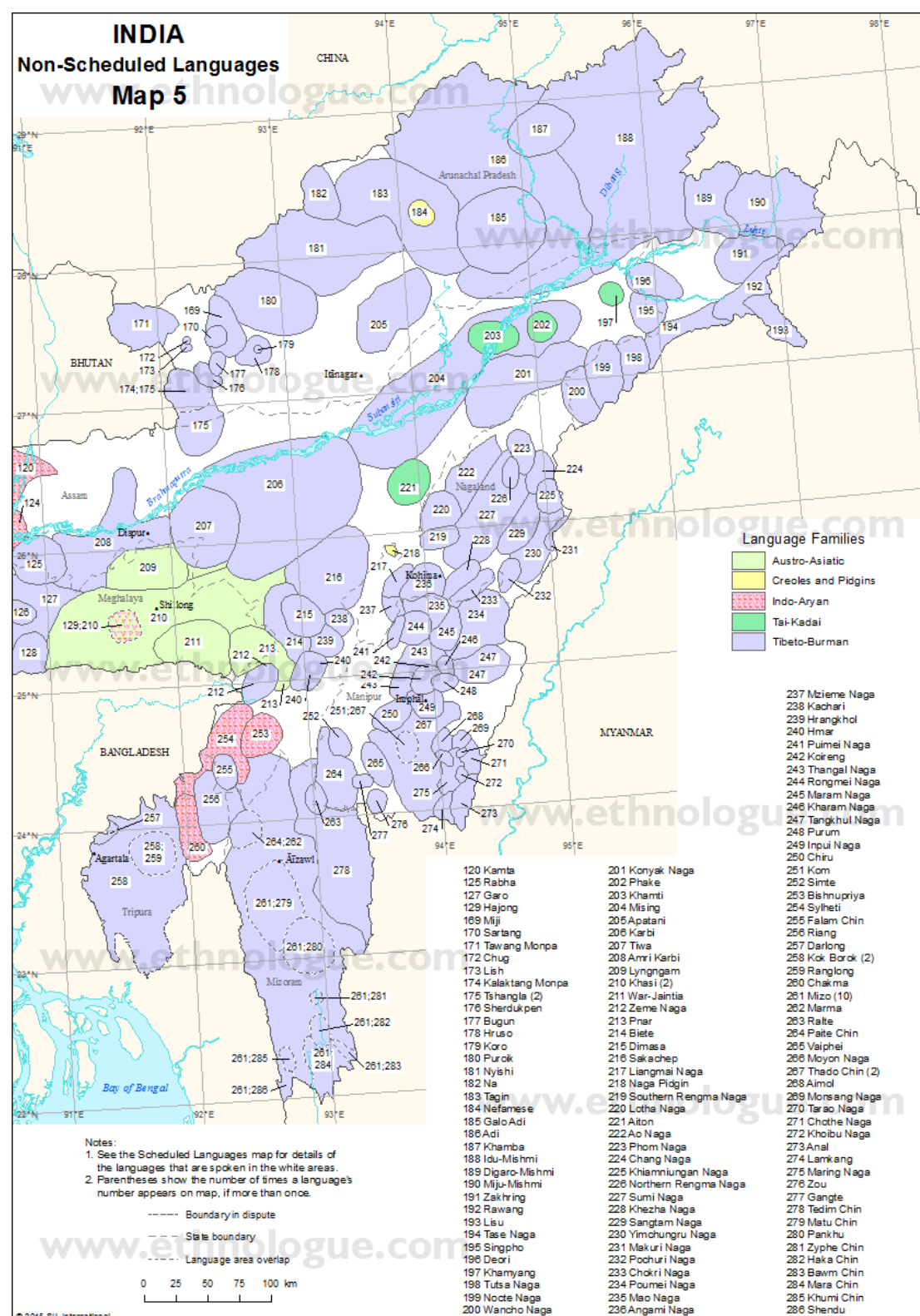


Figure 2: Distribution of non-scheduled languages in North East India (Lewis *et al* 2015)

Assamese peasants, stigmatized as being naturally 'indolent', 'lazy' and largely addicted to opium, could not be mobilized to work on the tea plantations. Nagas and Kacharies cleared up the jungle tracts, but they were found to be too independent to be disciplined, and were unwilling to live on the plantations. Assam was sparsely populated and did not have enough agricultural laborers to meet the growing demand for plantation labour.

(Behal 2014)



Figure 3: Distribution of Tibeto-Burman languages (van Driem 2014)

Most of these laborers, who were brought to Assam, belonged to small ethnic communities in their places of origin who spoke hitherto unknown Dravidian and Austro-Asiatic languages. Hence, an exodus of communities speaking myriad of languages started in the late 19th century to Assam. The following section will focus on the history migration of the tea garden communities and their geographical distribution in different tea gardens of Assam.

The Tea Garden Communities

The tea garden laborers, speaking at least 18 languages from three major language families came to Assam in various times from 1860 till 1947. They were brought by steamers from Calcutta through the Brahmaputra and were offloaded at various places in Assam, but mostly to upper Assam. Once in Assam, these communities were separated and mixed with other linguistic communities into different tea gardens to do manual labor. It was also made sure that separate communities were kept together so that there is less chance of mass escape or desertion.

Census 2001 report	India	Assam	Census 2001 report	India	Assam
Austro-Asiatic			Dravidian		
1. Santali	6,469,600	242,886	1. Kurux/Kurukh	1,751,489	72,311
2. Munda/Mundari	469,357/1,061,352	93,088/32,718	2. Gondi	2,713,790	8,468
3. Kharia	239,608	6,108	3. Kisan	141,088	1,475
4. Bhumij	47,443	2113	4. Parji ²⁶	51,216	601
5. Savara	252,519	406	5. Khond/Kondh*	118,597	425
6. Koda/Kora	43,030	308	6. Malto	224,926	328
7. Korwa	34,586	90	7. Konda	56,262	270
8. Gadaba	26,262	7	8. Koya	362,070	146
9. Korku	574,481	6	9. Kui	916,222	29
Indo-Aryan					
1. Bhili	9,582,957	212			

Table 1: Language family wise population distribution in India and Assam (Census of India, 2001)

²⁶ The 18th edition of Ethnologue records Parji as an Indo Aryan language and Khond as an alternate name of Kui.

As mentioned before, the local Assamese peasants were not keen on doing manual labor in the tea gardens. At the same time, wages demanded by Assamese peasants was much higher (Behal, 2014). Due to these factors, (a) Assamese peasants could never get close to the migrant labors from the tea gardens; (b) tea garden laborers did not go out of the tea garden areas and did not assimilate with the local Assamese populace. The tea laborers were never brought into the broader Assamese society and the acceptance of these communities within the mainstream Assamese society was extremely low. As a result of that the tea garden communities could have enough opportunity to preserve and maintain their original language, even though they were thousands of kilometers away from their homeland. This situation can be compared to the situation with the ethnic Chinese communities in the UK or USA, where the rate of assimilation of these ethnic communities could be so low that at least the first generation is successful in maintaining the language (see Zhang 2004). The languages mentioned in Table 1 are spoken among the tea garden communities in Assam. As seen in the table not all languages have substantial number of speakers.

The Soras

Sora is a South Munda language spoken by the tribes of the same name in eastern and central India. The eighteenth edition of Ethnologue records 9 alternate names of Sora, namely, Savara, Sabara, Sabar, Saonras, Saora, Saura, Sawaria, Shabari, Soura, and Swara. While the name Savara is used in Census of India of 2001 and in Grierson's Linguistic Survey of India (1930), the other names are not common. Census of India records 252,519 Sora speakers in India and the language is rated 'vulnerable' by UNESCO. Currently, Sora is spoken in sixteen states of India (see Figure 4 and Table 2). However, the population size suggests that greater number of Sora speakers in India live in Orissa and Andhra Pradesh. Whereas the remaining states, except Tripura and West Bengal, have less than a thousand speakers. Likewise, relevant literature on Sora language is also based on the Sora variety of Orissa that is spoken in Ganjam district. Hence, Sora language in India primarily represents Sora varieties of Orissa and Andhra Pradesh and so in this study we term it as the Central Indian Sora or (CIS).

It is also found that, in 19th century some Sora speakers had migrated from Ganjam district in Orissa to Assam as indentured tea laborers (Kar, 1979). Existence of 406 Sora speakers in Assam is also recorded in the Census of India (2001). But, community estimate suggests that the number of Sora speakers in Assam is much higher than the census report. Our earlier survey had revealed that approximately there are 1700 Soras in just two villages of Sonitpur district. However, while Kar mentioned that Soras in Assam are mainly found in Dibrugarh district, we observe that currently they are found in nine other districts as well (see Table 3). In this study we argue that Sora in Assam is a transplanted variety of CIS and use the term Assam Sora or (AS) to differentiate between the two.

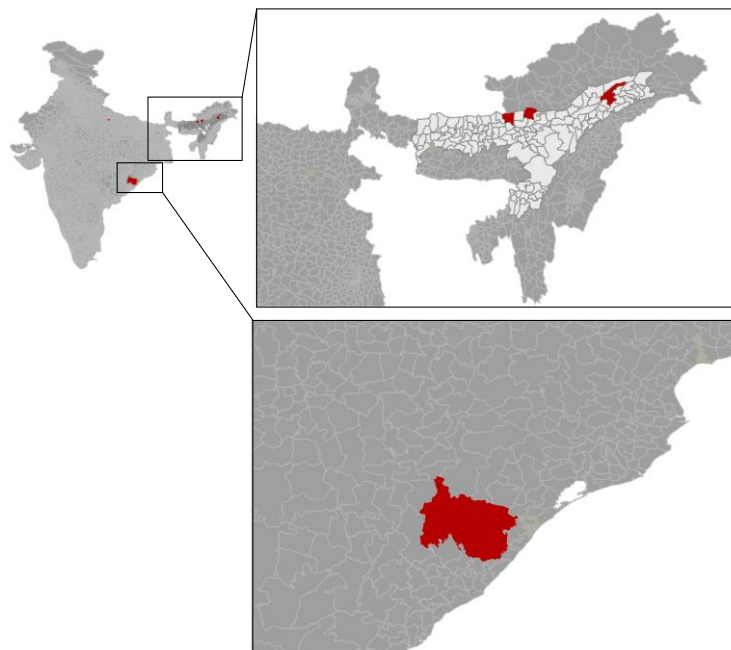


Figure 4: Sora speaking areas in India and Assam (From Horo and Sarmah, under revision)

States		Population	States		Population
1.	Orissa	172,288	9.	Maharashtra	112
2.	Andhra Pradesh	74,788	10.	Meghalaya	77
3.	Tripura	2,155	11.	Karnataka	28
4.	West Bengal	1,696	12.	Madhya Pradesh	13
5.	Jharkhand	639	13.	Bihar	4
6.	Assam	406	14.	Rajasthan	2
7.	Arunachal Pradesh	174	15.	Uttar Pradesh	1
8.	Chhattisgarh	135	16.	Haryana	1

Table 2: Sora population in 16 Indian states (Census of India, 2001)

Districts		Name of villages
1.	Sonitpur	Singrihan, Sessa, Thakurbari, Phulbari, Adabari, Harsura, Dibrudarangh, Belsiri, Sapoi, Bangabil, Partapgarh, Munabari, Pabhoi, Dikrai, Panbari, Baroi, Sonajuli
2.	Udalguri	Lamabari, Baipukhri, Betibari, Betali, Nunaipara, Dimakuchi, Hatigaon, Nagrijiuli
3.	Jorhat	Murmuria, Moriani, Doklongia, Nagajanka, Meleng, Boidia, Boisabi, Doli
4.	Nogaon	Salna, Hojai, Kothiatuli
5.	Karbi Anglong	Longboi
6.	Golaghat	Kohora, Methoni, Kaziranga, Hatikhuli, Borpholong, Doyang, Numoligarh, Telgaram, Rangajhan, Letkuli, Lobonghat
7.	Sibsagar	Dimo, Borpatro, Nagakata, Sontak, Rajmai
8.	Lakhimpur	Deju, Koilamari, Simoluguri
9.	Dibrugarh	Sepon, Moran, Khowang, Pathalibam, Chabua, Gorsinga, Konikor, Namsang
10.	Tinsukia	Barpatra, Kungsang

Table 3: District wise Sora villages in Assam (Data from Assam Sora informants)

SORAS AND THEIR LANGUAGE

In this study, we try to evaluate the status of Assam Sora: the domains in which it is spoken and the effects of the languages surrounding the Sora speaking areas. We investigate if the Sora spoken in Assam has changed over time due to the speakers' migration. We also examine if the present day Sora spoken in two specific areas of Assam can resemble the Sora that is spoken in the areas of origin of the language.

Literacy rate among the Soras in Assam

It is well known from several studies that the literacy rate among the communities in the tea gardens is generally low. It was shown by Kar (1981) that in Mancotta tea estate of Dibrugarh district, literacy rate of the Soras was 12.34% and there were only 118 Sora literates in the tea estate during that period. But, there is no recent data about the literacy rate of Sora community in Sonitpur district that we are investigating. The only information obtained from Census of India 2001 indicates that, literacy rate of Sonitpur district is 50.79% and there are 852,201 literates in the district. However, in the recent period researchers have obtained sample data that indicates a lower literacy rate of tea garden communities in various districts of Assam. For instance the sample data of Bosumatari and Goyari (2013) showed that in four tea gardens of Udalguri district the literacy rate of tea garden workers was only around 30.7% to 44%. Similarly, Debnath and Nath (2014) showed in their sample data that, in Dewan tea garden of Cachar district only 30% male and 16% female are literate.

Languages in the vicinity

A multilingual environment surrounds the communities that reside in the tea garden areas. Kar (1981) reported that, at least 31 'tribes/castes/communities' lived around the Soras of Mancotta tea estate in Dibrugarh district during the period of his study. He had divided the inhabitants in two categories namely 'tea labor communities' and 'non tea labor communities'. While he identified Ahom and Kachari as non-tea labor communities, he identified Santal, Mura, Lohar, Bauri, Oran and Bhumij as the tea labor communities. Hence, language contact is highly prevalent in the tea garden areas.

Sora community investigated in this work live in Sonitpur district. Official report²⁷ of Sonitpur district suggests that, Assamese is a language of wider communication in the district. Other languages reported in the district include Nepali, Bengali, Mishng, Rabhas, Mech, Nyishi, Garo, Adi, Apatani, and Lama. But, the report does not identify any language of the tea garden communities and rather categorizes them in a common category called 'Adivasi'. However the report makes a remark that, these communities speak some ancestral language and Assamese. Sora villages that we investigated do not have all these languages in the vicinity. We notice that apart from Assamese and Hindi there are at least 4 languages spoken in the area. They include Munda, Kharia and Santhali of Austro Asiatic family and Kurux of Dravidian family.

Additionally an Indo-Aryan language called Sadri is also seen as a language of wider communication in the area. Dey (2014) suggests that Sadri is a creolized Indo Aryan language spoken by the Sadans in the Chota Nagpur Plateau that is modern day Bihar, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, West Bengal and Orissa. She mentions that Sadri is also spoken as a 'link language' by some Austro Asiatic, Dravidian and Indo-Aryan communities in the same region. Hence, it is found that when these communities migrated to Assam, they continued to use Sadri for the same purpose. However, Dey calls it Assam Sadri to distinguish it from the Nagpuria Sadri, since she observes differences at lexical, phonological and morphological levels. She also argues that [creolization](#) of Sadri is primarily due to intermarriages between the communities. Moreover, Peterson (2010) had suggested that language contact in Eastern and Central India between some Munda languages and Sadri is causing a bidirectional convergence. He proposed that there were lexical and syntactic convergence occurring from both directions. In Assam as well it is observed that the use of Sadri in tea garden areas is very dominant. Every tea garden inhabitant speaks Sadri as either a second language or even as first language in cases where their ancestral language does not transfer. Hence, an impact of Sadri on the Austro Asiatic and Dravidian languages is evident even in this area.

It is discussed earlier that Assamese is a language of wider communication in Assam, hence an effect of Assamese is also found on the Sora community in Assam. However, it is observed that the Sora community we investigated uses Assamese only for formal purposes. This involves education, and in government offices. We notice that in the government run schools the medium of instruction is always Assamese, whereas in a few privately owned schools the medium of instruction is English. However, in our fieldworks we hardly found any Sora child attending an English medium school. Moreover, a few Sora teachers in the government schools mentioned that, since the Sora children do not understand Assamese in their early days of schooling, they would frequently use their home language inside the class room to teach and explain.

Sigrijhan and Sessa varieties of Assam Sora

We investigated Sora as spoken in two villages of Sonitpur district namely Sessa and Singrijhan. These are two major Sora villages in Assam. Approximately there are 750 persons in Sessa and 1000 persons in Singrijhan. We observed that in spite of the migration that happened more than 150 years ago, Sora still survives as a transplanted language. However, the maintenance situation of the language is different across different tea gardens. For instance, the Sora villages Sessa and Singrijhan have clearly different situations. It is found that in Singrijhan, Sora is spoken by all age groups whereas in Sessa, Sora is spoken only by people above 40 years of age and the rest mostly speak Sadri. This indicates that in Sessa, the use of Sora in home domain is decreasing and hence, Sora is not transferring from one generation to the next. Subsequently there is a language contact with Sadri in the vicinity that is also causing a language shift among young Sora speakers of Sessa. On the other hand it is evident that the use of Sora in home, religious and social domains has resulted in a well-maintained Sora in Singrijhan.

²⁷ Source: Official website of Sonitpur district www.sonitpur.gov.in accessed on 19th August 2015

It can be hypothesized that diachronically some people were able to preserve Sora in Assam, since after migration the planters did not allow them to interact with other communities. However, at present it is significant that despite the pressure of Assamese and Sadri, Sora is still well maintained in a few villages. In those cases, it is found apart from the home domain, Sora is also used for community socialization. This involves the use of Sora in larger domains like religion and social events like marriages, birth and death rituals, cultural gatherings etc. Hence, such motivation has subsequently helped a few Sora villages to well maintain their language. On the contrary, villages that lack such motivation to extend home language to community socialization are eventually facing a language shift.

Moreover, there is also an impact of a socio-political organization called the 'All Assam Sora Samaj', which is a motivating factor for language maintenance. It was established on November 3rd, 1979 through the initiative of the Baptist Missionary Church of Dholpur Christian Basti. The 'All Assam Sora Samaj' is modeled after the literary society of Assam, 'Assam Sahitya Sabha'. Inspired by their ideologies 'All Assam Sora Samaj' is promoting language usage in all Sora dominated areas. The apex organization is responsible for creating materials that promotes Sora language in both print and electronic means. Moreover, the apex organization has built a connection between AS and CIS that subsequently helped some AS speakers to maintain their language. Additionally there are also civil society organizations that raise awareness among tea labors to preserve their language as a need to preserve their cultural identities.

Linguistic Difference between Assam Sora and Central Indian Sora

CIS data taken from Anderson and Harrison (2000-2012) revealed that there are lexical differences in AS and CIS (See Table 4). Additionally, our analysis of AS vowel inventory also stands distinct from CIS vowel descriptions.

Central Indian Sora (CIS)	Assam Sora (AS)	English
miŋnim	aŋgai	<i>Month</i>
ariŋtel	pisra	<i>Funnel</i>
boʔonid	tappaŋ	<i>Cut in one stroke</i>
taʔarina	palu	<i>White</i>
ənapsi idən	siʔili	<i>Lost, be</i>
jənimdəmjem	jennati	<i>Own</i>

Table 4: Lexical comparison between AS and CIS

Phonemic description of CIS has been discussed in Stampe (1965), Ramamurti (1986), Donegan (1993), Donegan and Stampe (2002) and Anderson (2008). However, a description of AS is not available except for one of our previous study (Horo and Sarmah, under revision). In our analysis we noticed that the vowel inventory sizes in AS and CIS are not comparable.

In case of CIS, Stampe (1965) proposed that there are 9 distinct vowels [i, e, ə, i, a, o, ɔ, ɛ and u] in CIS. This makes CIS the only Munda language with 9 vowels. Later Donegan, (1993) also suggested that 9 to 12 vowels are common in Mon Khmer languages, but is unnatural in Munda languages except for Sora. She reported that the loss of a mid central vowel [ə] and a high central vowel [i] in other Munda languages is mostly due to the intrinsic shortness of the vowels. She also discussed the process of [i] and [ə] changing to full and optimal vowels in two munda languages such that [i] changed to [i] in Gutob, whereas, [i] and [ə] changed [u] and [o] in Remo. However, she remarked that in CIS both [i] and [ə] are optimally retained in closed syllables.

A second vowel inventory of CIS is found in Ramamurti (1986) that includes six vowel categories [i, e, a, o, u and ə]. Ramamurti's inventory also has two allophones [ɪ] and [ʊ], glottalized vowels [ʔV] and three vowel lengths namely normal, short and long. The allophone [ɪ] is reported to be used interchangeably with [i] and the allophone [ʊ] is reported to be a variant of either [o] or [u]. However, while the presence glottalized vowels in CIS is agreed by later scholars, the presence of phonemic vowel length is still undecided. A third vowel inventory of CIS is suggested by Anderson

(2008) that includes 8 vowels [i, e, o, a, u, ʊ, i, ə]. In Anderson's inventory it is noticed that while the vowels [ɔ] and [ɛ] are not included, the vowel /ʊ/ is treated as a distinct vowel in the inventory.

On the other hand, our earlier observation suggests that AS has only 6 vowels [i, e, a, o, u and ə]. An acoustic analysis of the vowels also revealed that there are only six contrastive vowels in AS. Figure 5 presents the acoustic vowel diagram as produced by 12 AS speakers (7 male and 5 female) with F1 and F2 normalized by Lobanov normalization method.

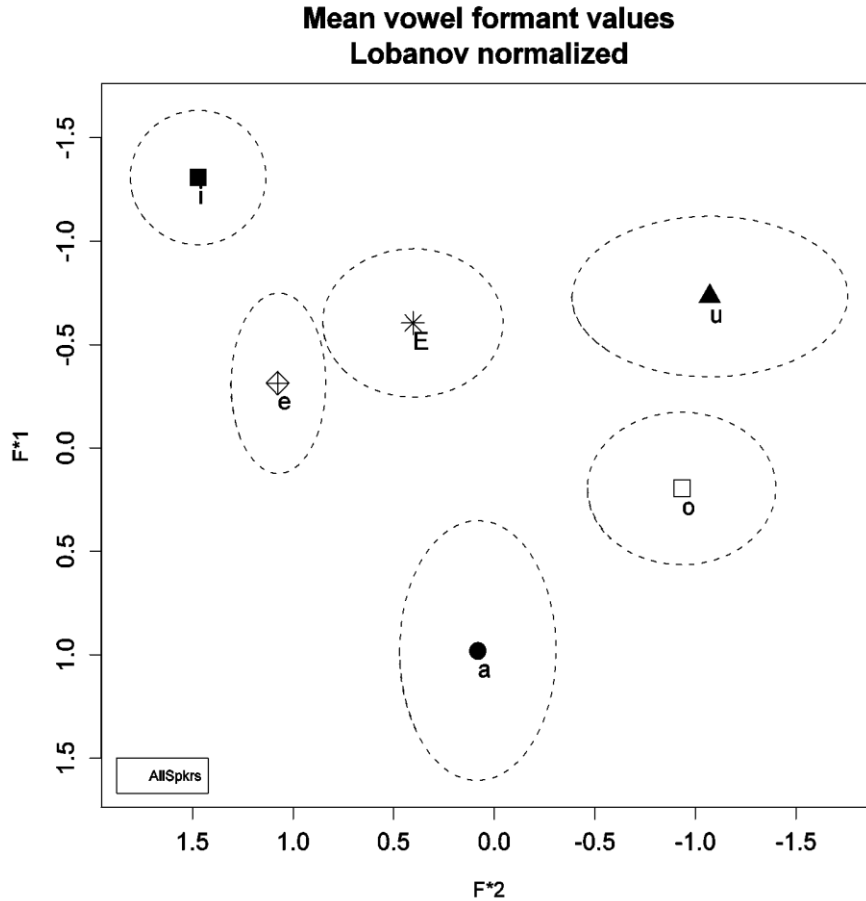


Figure 5: Vowel diagram for the six Sora vowels with formant frequencies normalized in NORM. Ellipses show areas containing all points within one standard deviation of the mean.

We observe that there are only six contrastive vowels in AS and [ə] is a distinct vowel phoneme. While, it is unknown how the other vowels of CIS are changed in AS, it is found that, [i] in AS is changed to various vowel categories like [i], [e] and [ə] (Horo and Sarmah, 2014).

However, in a phylogenetic study comparing 18 languages including 8 languages spoken in the tea gardens of Assam, we concluded that these 8 languages, in spite of being transplanted in Assam, did not merge with each other, rather maintained their affinity to the synchronic varieties spoken in central India (Sarmah *et al*, 2012). As seen in Figure 6, we computed a cluster dendrogram for the tea garden languages that are spoken in Assam and compared them with their counterparts available in central India. The left branch of the tree successfully clustered all the languages that belong to the Austro-Asiatic language family. Under that branch, Sora and Santali as spoken in Assam are clustered in a sub branch with their central Indian counterparts. We did not have lexical data for Mundari and hence, Mundari does not show a central Indian counterpart on the tree. However, it is noteworthy here that the sub branches of the languages spoken in Assam are not merged, indicating less shift and more salience. On the major branch on the right, Kurux and Sadri are clustered together, indicating shared lexicon of the two languages. However, again Kurux as spoken in Assam and Kurux as spoken in central India are branched together indicating salience from Sadri as spoken in Assam. The cluster dendrogram in Figure 6 indicates that in spite of the odds, the languages in tea garden are maintaining their salience in terms of their lexicon.

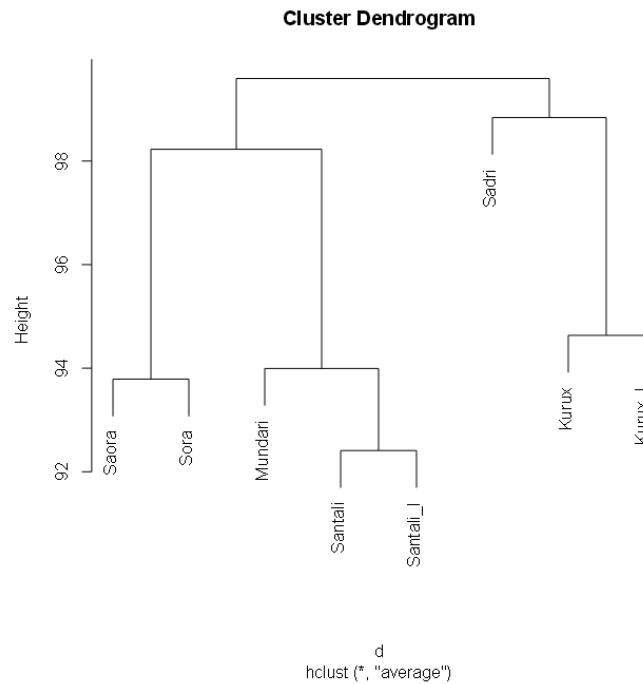


Figure 6: Phylogenetic cluster solution for the data from tea garden languages (Saora = CIS and Sora = AS, Santali_I and Kurux_I = Central Indian varieties)

CONCLUSIONS

From the data collected for Sora in Assam, we see two contrasting tendencies: while some of the Sora speakers have abandoned their language in favor of Sadri or Assamese, many others as seen in case of Singrijhan and Sessa varieties, have maintained their language.

As the medium of instruction at school is not Sora, but Assamese or English, many Sora speakers are abandoning their mother tongue for the language of the medium of instruction in educational institutions. Apart from that, influence of major languages in the vicinity, lack of writing system, illiteracy and also speakers' own attitude towards their language are some reasons why Sora is being abandoned in favor of other languages. At the same time there are counter forces that are helping some speakers to maintain Sora in Assam. Assam has a history of language based political movements. This background must have perpetuated the establishment of the Sora literary society that helped in maintaining the language in their society.

When looked at the synchronic varieties of Sora as spoken in India and Assam, we see that there are some differences. As far as the lexical differences are concerned, they probably occur due to the change of context in which the languages are spoken. Again, language contact must have caused some changes. However, our phylogenetic study based on lexical items showed that there is still strong correlation between the Sora spoken in central India and in Assam.

In terms of the vowel systems, we notice that Assam Sora, the transplanted variety of Sora has lesser number of vowels. If the vowel inventories reported in the previous studies to be believed, there are 7 to 9 vowels in the Sora inventory. Whereas, AS has a vowel inventory of 6 vowels with [i, e, a, o, u and ə]. As far as typological evidence is concerned, it is seen that a vowel system as the one in Assam Sora is more common. Hence, considering the descriptions of central Indian Sora vowel systems to be true, we think that the transplanted variety of Sora moves towards a more unmarked 6 vowel inventory.



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